



TRANSITION PLAN For the Delayed Closure of William Rainey Harper High School

Introduction

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to providing every child from every community with a high quality education that prepares them for success in college and in life. CPS students continue to make record-breaking academic progress in every part of the city. Our vision is that all CPS schools can build on this progress by offering high quality, rigorous instruction from talented educators that help put Chicago students on a path to lasting success.

On December 1st, 2017, CPS proposed the closure of William Rainey Harper High School (Harper) located at 6520 S. Wood St. in the Englewood neighborhood and CPS' Network 11. The proposed closure was based on the declining enrollment at Harper. In the fall of 2006, enrollment at Harper was 1,301 students while enrollment in fall of 2017 was 133 students. The proposed closure of Harper met the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions ("Guidelines") because it was a proposal requested by community members via the process to request proposals outlined in the Guidelines. Specifically, we heard the request for this proposal from the Englewood Community Action Council and at a meeting of the Englewood Community Leadership Steering Committee in calendar year 2017.

Following the December 1st announcement, CPS continued an extensive community engagement process involving community meetings, parent meetings, a public hearing, and regular discussions with elected officials and the Englewood Steering Committee. Based on feedback, CPS is proposing to adjust the Englewood High School proposal to allow current students at Harper to graduate from their school.

Summary of Action

Harper is a neighborhood high school located at 6520 S. Wood St. in the Englewood neighborhood and is part of Network 11. Harper currently serves 133 students in grades 9-12. CPS is proposing to close Harper High school at the end of the 2020-2021 school year, effective July 1st, 2021.

As a result of this action, all current students at Harper will have the opportunity to finish high school at their current school. Since Harper, Hope and TEAM will close after current freshman graduate, freshman will not be admitted next year and the attendance areas for the schools and will be assigned to higher performing neighborhood high schools in SY 2018-2019. Although current Harper, Hope and TEAM students are welcome to stay at their



schools under the revised proposal, CPS is also committed to supporting students who have decided transitioning to a new high school is best for them. If students at Harper, Hope and TEAM choose to attend another CPS school next year, the district will offer them robust transition supports that were outlined in the District's December proposal.

The proposed delayed closure of Harper meets the criteria of the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions ("Guidelines") because it is a proposal requested by community members via the process to request proposals outlined in the Guidelines. Specifically, we have heard the request for this proposal from community members at the two community hearings on January 10th, 2018 and January 17th, 2018 and community members at the Public Hearing on January 30th, 2018.

Chicago Public Schools had set aside \$8.3 million dollars over the next 3.5 years to support students from Harper, Hope, Robeson and TEAM Englewood. Under the revised plan, this funding will support current students at Harper, Hope and TEAM in the form of program support funding to ensure core subjects are available and students can graduate with all required classes. The funding will also support any student that wants to transfer to another school.

Supports for students who elect to transfer:

Transition Teams

Under the original proposal, CPS allocated funds to hire additional staff to support students as they transition from their current school to a different school. Under the revised plan, Harper will still benefit from the following position:

- **Principal Transition Coordinator:** The Principal Transition Coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the transition team and transition supports for students that choose to transfer from Harper. They will be responsible for holding all members of the transition team accountable for hitting key milestones along each student's transition (i.e. choosing the school each student will transition to, preparing an academic plan). They will also be responsible for overseeing administrative needs such as transferring student records to students' respective schools. In addition, they will provide support to administrators and school staff at transition schools to ensure they are prepared to welcome transitioning students. Principal Transition Coordinators will be experienced former or current CPS Principals.

Student Outreach and Re-engagement Center (SOAR): In the 2018-2019 school year, the SOAR Center will follow-up with all transitioning students from Harper high school to track attendance and enrollment and ensure student engagement in learning. Early interventions will be identified for students who demonstrate disengagement.



General Supports for students and families

Students from Harper who decide to transfer out will receive a variety of supports to ensure they have access to high quality classroom academics, interventions for those struggling with literacy and math, counseling and social supports and student safety support. The goal will be to ensure that students and their families receive access to quality instruction, understand their rights, available school options and are safe and secure through the transition process.

Supporting transitioning students at Harper in choosing a school for the 2018-2019 school year

To support students who choose to transfer, CPS will provide information on open seats and performance at CPS schools to support students in selecting their school.

Timeline for Supporting Transitioning Students

- *Throughout March:* Provide all students from Harper interested in transferring with the opportunity to meet with a CPS staff member to support them in discussing their options and filling out an application
- *Throughout March:* Hold meetings with parents from Harper to learn about other high school options
- *[March 10th]:* Hold a High School Fair at Kennedy King College (9:00 AM-12:00 PM)
- *[By April 6th]:* Interested students submit their transfer preferences (up to 10 schools)
- *[By April 27th]* Students receive their enrollment options from the Office of Access and Enrollment
- *[By May 18th]:* Students submit their final choice
- *[By June 7th]* Finalize academic readiness plans to prepare for transition
- *[By June 7th]* Finalize safety plans to ensure students can travel safely to school next year
- *[By June 7th]* Provide academic student “resumes” to schools that students will transition to in the School Year 2018-2019

Transferring students will also be given the opportunity to meet with school staff at schools they transition to, including teachers, principals and coaches, prior to the beginning of the school year (e.g. over the summer).

Support for families

CPS will host two parent meetings for parents of Harper students in March 2018. Families who are looking for additional guidance on school options should attend one of these meetings. For families unable to attend a meeting, the Network office will conduct office hours to help families navigate the process. Please contact your Network for specific timing.

- Email: transitions@cps.edu
- Phone number: 773-535-8230



CPS will guarantee the Principal Transition Coordinator position through, at least, the end of School Year 2018-19, to ensure a smooth transition process through the first transition year for students who choose to transfer. In terms of additional supports, CPS will work with each school welcoming students from Harper to create a plan to support transitioning students. The plan will include requested supports to ensure the academic and social-emotional well-being of all students. CPS will then provide funds proportional to the number of transitioning students being welcomed at the school students transition to. These funds will be adjusted each semester based on the number of transitioning students present at each school in that semester. Each plan will include:

Supporting student social-emotional needs

CPS understands that whenever students transition into new situations and environments, additional support is needed to help them adjust. CPS and The Office of Social Emotional Learning (“OSEL”) will consult with schools that receive transitioning Englewood students to evaluate existing SEL supports and determine additional resource needs for a school-specific plan. These plans may include the following:

- Establishing a climate & culture team to lead the planning of school-wide practices to promote positive relationships and a welcoming, supportive and trauma-sensitive school environment.
- Implementing restorative practices (such as talking circles and peer councils) to encourage peer-to-peer problem-solving and resolution.
- Developing behavioral health systems to identify when students have higher levels of social and emotional need, connect them to targeted interventions and track their progress to ensure success.
- Implementing targeted small group supports or circles aimed at helping students work through concerns associated with transition, as needed.
- Accessing social & emotional or trauma interventions for students in need of more individualized attention.
- Developing Student Leadership and Culture-Building Activities to ensure students feel welcome in schools they transition to.
- Ensuring continuity of existing mentorship programs (e.g. BAM and WOW) to serve students throughout the transition process.
- Providing professional development and training opportunities in trauma-sensitive practices, restorative practices, social emotional learning and other relevant topics to staff at schools that students transition to.

Supporting student academic needs

All students at Harper high school will have the opportunity to engage in academic supports and after school employment during spring 2018 semester. Students will earn a stipend for weekly attendance.



After students choose their new school, the principal and school leadership team of the schools welcoming students will receive academic resumes on each transitioning student and determine how to best allocate additional district resources to support transitioning students. These supports could include:

- Academic remediation and intervention supports such as tutoring and credit recovery.
- Additional staffing to support students in classrooms.

Safety and Security

The CPS Office of Safety & Security has engaged the Englewood community, including the Community Leadership Steering Committee, on transitioning student safety. The Office of Safety & Security will continue to work with Harper and the Englewood community to ensure that appropriate safety and security plans are in place to support students that choose to transfer. Safety supports discussed to date are included below. These supports may be further customized based on the feedback received. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students (if deemed necessary).

- Review existing safe passage routes and adjust routes as appropriate based on an assessment of the schools where students will be transitioning to
- Partner with CTA to review potential staging of buses to facilitate safe and smooth dismissals
- Evaluate transportation support, including distribution of limited use CTA cards for transitioning students based on their individualized safety plans
- Review security staffing and adjust staffing as appropriate in schools where students will be transitioning to
- Evaluate security systems and technology in schools that students transition to

Support for students with diverse learning needs

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring the schools that students transition to are fully able to implement student Individual Education Programs ("IEPs"). Students with disabilities, as with all students impacted by school actions, will receive intensive support directly after announcement of a proposed school action, to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family needs:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- *A free and appropriate public education ("FAPE")*
- *The implementation of the student's IEP in the least restrictive environment ("LRE")*
- *A focus on student academic and social emotional progress*



In addition, to ensure that instructional quality is maintained, CPS will additionally provide the following support:

- *As students move through this process, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (“ODLSS”) will be assigned to students choosing to transition from Harper to work with families and students to ensure they are informed on their options and support them throughout the process of transitioning to their new school for the 2018-2019 school year. Specifically the district representative will:*
 - *Review all IEPs with the school students transition to ensure implementation and provide observations of classrooms when school has started and train staff on specialized equipment for specific student needs*

Students in Temporary Living Situations

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations will continue the supports currently provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (“STLS”) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible, and waiver of all school related fees.
- Students in Temporary Living Situations will be encouraged to attend any events in which they can meet with school staff and/or learn about schools to transition to should they decide to transfer.
- For those students who had been homeless prior to the 2018-2019 school, their school of origin will become the first school they enroll in for the 2018-2019 school year.

English Language Learners

Current and future English Language Learners (ELs) will receive state mandated bilingual services (Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI), as required. English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs. Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies). For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student’s need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s)

Public Comment

CPS held two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding the proposed closure of Englewood High Schools. Public comment was accepted during each meeting or



hearing and the transcripts can be found online at cps.edu/transitions. The community meetings and public hearing were during the following dates and times:

Community Meeting #1

January 10th, 2018
6:00-8:00 PM
Kennedy King College
740 W. 63rd St.

Community Meeting #2

January 17th, 2018
6:00-8:00 PM
Hamilton Park Fieldhouse
513 W. 72nd St.

Public Hearing # 1

January 30th, 2018
6:00-8:00 PM
CPS Loop Office
42 West Madison Street,
Garden Level, Board Room

Further Questions and Concerns:

All of this information can be found at CPS.edu/Transitions. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this transition plan, please call Chicago Public Schools at (773) 553-1500 or email Transitions@cps.edu.